

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LUSAKA 01130 01 OF 02 280653Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 /026 W

-----280700Z 024096 /12

O R 261730Z APR 77 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5513

AMEMBASSY LONDON NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 1130

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TEXT /PAR 1 LN 9 - PAR 2 LN 11/

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RH

SUBJECT: NKOMO ON THE OWEN PROPOSALS

REF: STATE 93337

SUMMARY: JOSHUA NKOMO SPOKE TO ME AND THE DCM ABOUT HIS DESIRE TO MEET WITH SECRETARY VANCE IN EUROPE MAY 6 TO 8 AND HIS OBJECTIONS TO THE OWEN PROPOSALS. ALSO PRESENT WAS HIS PERSONAL ASSISTANT JOHN NKOMO (NO RELATION). WHILE SUPPORTING US INVOLVEMENT, HE SPECIFICALLY ADVISED AGAINST FORMAL US PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE. HE SAID THE NEGOTIATIONS MUST BE CONFINED TO BRITAIN AND THE FIGHTING PARTICIPANTS, I.E., THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND SUGGESTED TERMS OF A SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BEFORE WE GET INTO TALKS ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION. THE ZAPU LEADER SEEMED SATISFIED WITH OUR SUGGESTION THAT SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR

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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE BE CHanneled THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE UN HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A CONVERSATION LASTING OVER AN HOUR AT THE RESIDENCE, JOSHUA NKOMO WAS AT HIS MOST AMIABLE AND FRIENDLIEST WHILE SHOWING LEAST GIVE TO DATE IN HIS OBJECTIONS TO THE OWEN

PROPOSALS. IN A RELAXED AND JOKING FRAME OF MIND, HE FIRST BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF SECY VANCE'S TRAVEL TO EUROPE. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THIS WAS PROBABLY THE PURPOSE OF HIS REQUEST TO SEE ME BESIDES WANTING TO GIVE US HIS VIEWS ON THE OWEN PROPOSALS. HE NOTED THAT HE WOULD BE IN PARIS FROM THE 6TH TO THE 8TH OF MAY AND WONDERED WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO FLY OVER TO LONDON TO MEET WITH THE SECY. HE RECOGNIZED THE BUSY PROGRAM IN WHICH THE SECRETARY WOULD BE INVOLVED DURING THE HEADS OF STATE MEETING BUT SAID HE NEEDED ONLY HALF AN HOUR OF THE SECY'S TIME. NKOMO WILL BE LEAVING LUSAKA FRIDAY THE 29TH. HE CAN BE REACHED IN PARIS THROUGH THE FRENCH GOVT OR HERE THROUGH HIS ASSISTANT. I PROMISED TO RELAY HIS REQUEST WHILE MAKING CLEAR THAT DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL PART OF THE VISIT WITH MANY OTHER COUNTRIES INVOLVED THERE WOULD BE VERY LITTLE TIME AVAILABLE FOR THE SECRETARY TO SEE HIM. HE SAID HE WOULD BE UNAVAILABLE FROM THE 9TH THROUGH THE END OF THE MONTH. HE PLANS TO VISIT THE U.S. IN SEPTEMBER.

2. NKOMO THEN LAUNCHED INTO THE OWEN PROPOSALS AND THE SUBJECT OF US PARTICIPATION. HE ASKED SPECIFICALLY, IF U.S. PARTICIPATED, HOW WE WOULD EXCLUDE OTHER NATIONS, "LIKE GABON", WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN TAKING PART AND HE SAID UNEQUIVOCALLY "MY ADVICE TO YOU IS TO DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO HELP OUTSIDE THE CONFERENCE BUT DO NOT COSPONSOR OR PARTICIPATE IN IT FORMALLY." I REPLIED THAT WHILE WE COULD SEE THIS POINT, THERE WERE OTHER STRONG REASONS AND PARTIES ARGUING FOR CLOSE US INVOLVEMENT. BOTH BRITAIN AND THE REGIMES TO THE SOUTH FELT THAT THE US COULD CONTRIBUTE SO FAR AS THE BRITISH ARE CONCERNED, THIS APPLIED PARTICULARLY WHEN IT COMES TO IMPLEMENT

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ENDING THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE; BUT I SAID WE WERE GLAD TO GET HIS VIEWS."

3. NKOMO TURNED TO REPRESENTATION AT THE CONFERENCE. HE SHOWED NO GIVE WHATSOEVER IN HIS POSITION THAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST BE BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THOSE DOING THE FIGHTING I.E., THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. PARTICIPATION AT THE CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE TO BE DECIDED BEFOREHAND. I SAID I THOUGHT DR. OWEN HAD MADE FAIRLY CLEAR THAT HE INTENDED TO CONSULT ALL POINTS OF VIEW. NKOMO RESPONDED THAT HE DID NOT ACCEPT OWEN'S POSITION THAT HE ALONE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESENTING THE CONSTITUTION TO PARLIAMENT AND HE COULD CONSULT WHOM HE WISHED. WHEN I SAID I THOUGHT THIS WAS CLEARLY INTENDED TO FORESTALL THE POSSIBILITY OF A SMITH VETO, NKOMO RESPONDED THAT THOUGH THAT WAS WHAT WAS BEING SAID, HE RECOGNIZED THAT IT WAS REALLY A THINLY VEILED THREAT TO PROCEED WHETHER OR NOT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT PARTICIPATED AND HE COULD NOT ACCEPT IT. I NOTED THAT WHAT WAS BEING PROPOSED

WAS DISCUSSION OF A CONSTITUTION TO APPLY TO AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE. THIS WAS A LEGAL AND POLITICAL INSTRUMENT WHICH WOULD AFFECT EVERYONE. THIS POINT, MADE BY BRITISH HICOM LAST WEEK, HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN CONSIDERED BY NKOMO AS EVIDENCED BY HIS REPLY THAT THE CONFERENCE COULD NOT BE CONFINED SIMPLY TO DISCUSSION OF A CONSTITUTION. THE TOTAL SETTLEMENT HAD TO BE CONSIDERED. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION HE CARRIED THIS FURTHER BY SAYING THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DISCUSS THE CONSTITUTION WHILE THE FIGHTING WAS STILL GOING ON. WHAT WAS NEEDED FIRST WAS A SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUES FOR WHICH PEOPLE WERE FIGHTING BY THOSE INVOLVED, I.E., THE NATIONALISTS AND THE BRITISH. I SAID I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE VERY HARD FOR EITHER THE BRITISH OR US TO ACCEPT NEGOTIATIONS WHICH EXCLUDED IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THE SITUATION. ONLY HERE DID HE BECOME SLIGHTLY DEFENSIVE BY DENYING THAT HE WAS EXCLUDING ANYONE AND CONTENDING THAT THE ONLY GROUPS NOT INCLUDED IN THE FIGHTING WERE THOSE WHICH HE HIMSELF HAD CREATED(ANC/MUZOREWA) AND REPRESENTED LITTLE OR  
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NOTHING.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----261856Z 128781 /44

O R 261730Z APR 77 ZFF-4  
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5514  
AMEMBASSY LONDON NIACT IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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EXDIS

4. AS HE ALWAYS DOES, NKOMO JOKINGLY REFERRED TO HIMSELF AS

THE PERSON CONSIDERED BY THE WEST TO BE A COMMUNIST. HE NOTED THE LACK OF WESTERN MILITARY SUPPORT FOR HIS FIGHT THOUGH HE ACCEPTED THAT JUST AS THE WEST OFFERED NO OBJECTIONS TO THE WAY HE CONSIDERED HE MUST PURSUE MAJORITY RULE, SO THE WEST MUST FIND ITS OWN WAY TO BRING THIS ABOUT. HE REPLIED THAT IT WAS FINE IF WE DID NOT OFFER HIM MILITARY EQUIPMENT BUT WHAT ABOUT THE NEEDS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE? I REPLIED ON THE BASIS OF THE GUIDANCE IN STATE 93337, EXPLAINING THAT WHILE WE COULD NOT PROMISE ANYTHING, WE WOULD ENTERTAIN ANY SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE SUBMITTED THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION. HE SEEMED TO ACCEPT THIS QUITE READILY, "SO LONG AS THEY DON'T TREAT MY PEOPLE AS REFUGEES", AND NOTED TO JOHN NKOMO THAT HE SHOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH THE UN HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES REP IN LUSAKA PROMPTLY.

5. THE MEETING ENDED ON A CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY TONE.

6. COMMENT: I BELIEVE NKOMO'S PRIME PURPOSE IN ASKING TO SEE ME WAS TO TRY TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH SECY VANCE. HE HAS  
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UNDOUBTEDLY NOTED THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH VANCE. HE REHEARSED HIS ARGUMENTS AGAINST US FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE OR THAT OF OTHER NATIONALIST GROUPS NOT INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING, I.E. NON PATRIOTIC FRONT, WITHOUT INDICATING ANY GIVE AT ALL AND SEEMED TO BE ARGUING FOR A DELAY IN CONSIDERATION OF A CONSTITUTION FOR THE TIME BEING. I SUSPECT THAT IN FACT THERE IS MORE GIVE IN HIS POSITION THAN HE WISHED TO INDICATE TO ME. ONE WAS LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT HE SEES NO WAY OF COMING OUT OF THE CONFERENCE PRESENTLY PROPOSED AS THE LEADER OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE AND THAT HE IS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT ANY PROCESS SHORT OF THIS. HE NEEDS MORE TIME TO BUILD HIS FORCES AND GAIN RECOGNITION THROUGHOUT AFRICA AND CONVINCE ALL INVOLVED THAT THE ONLY WAY AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE CAN AVOID CIVIL STRIFE IS THROUGH RECOGNITION OF THE SUPREMACY OF THE FIGHTING FORCES AND OF THOSE WHO CONTROL THEM.

7. RECOMMENDATION: WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT IF THERE IS ANY ROOM IN THE SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE HE AGREE TO SEE NKOMO. MEETING WITH HIM WOULD CONFIRM HIGH LEVEL U.S. INTEREST IN CONSULTING AFRICANS MOST IMMEDIATELY CONCERNED WITH THE FUTURE OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE. IT WOULD SHOW EVEN HANDEDNESS AMONG THE NATIONALISTS AND HELP TO DAMPEN SUSPICIONS THAT THE U.S. IS WAIVERING TOWARDS AN INTERNAL SOLUTION.  
WE WOULD APPRECIATE  
BEING ABLE TO INFORM NKOMO ONE WAY OR THE OTHER OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY IN LONDON ON MAY 6, 7 OR 8.  
LOW

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## Message Attributes

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**Type:** TE  
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